

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0071

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3085

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TAGS: PINS, SCUL, PO

SUBJ: THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: SNAPSHOT OF AN
INSTITUTION IN CHAOS

1. THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION EMPLOYES ONE-THIRD OF THE
CIVIL SERVANTS IN PORTUGAL. ITS 1974 BUDGET IS DOLS 267.3
MILLION MAKING IT, AFTER DEFENSE, THE MOST GENEROUSLY
FUNDED MINISTRY IN THE GOVERNMENT.

2. THE CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING UNIVERSITY PLANT (THE
UNIVERSITIES IN LISBON, OPORTO AND COIMBRA) IS 40,000
STUDENTS. LAST ACADEMIC YEAR, OVER 50,000 STUDENTS WERE
ENROLLED. WITH THE LOWERING OF STANDARDS FORCED UPON
THE MINISTRY BY A COMBINATION OF ANARCHICAL STUDENTS AND
ZEALOUS PROFESSORS, ANY STUDENT WITH A HIGH SCHOOL
DIPLOMA HAS ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION. SOME 19,000
ADDITIONAL STUDENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADMISSION TO
UNIVERSITY IN OCTOBER, WHEN CLASSES ARE SUPPOSED TO
RESUME.

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3. THIS SAME COMBINATION OF STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS, JOINED BY CLERKS, CLEANING WOMEN AND THE LIKE, HAVE CALLED FOR THE "PURIFICATION" OF THE MINISTRY. IF THEY GET THEIR WAY, THE TECHNOCRATS WHO NOW PROVIDE BUREAUCRATIC LEADERSHIP WILL BE DISMISSED AND WITH THEM WILL GO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS.

4. COMMENT: MAHALHAES GODINHO, THE NEW EDUCATION MINISTER, AN OLD LINE SOCIALIST, HONEST AND RESPECTED AS A ECONOMIC HISTORIA, LACKS FLEXIBILITY. HE IS REPORTED TO BE A "LAW AND ORDER" MAN IN THE SENSE THAT HE BELIEVES STUDENTS SHOULD WORK FOR THEIR DEGREES. THE BETTING HERE IS THAT HE WILL HAVE A CONFRONTATION WITH THE STUDENTS IN OCTOBER, MAYBE SOONER, AND THAT HE WILL LOSE. THE EDUCATIONAL MACHINERY WILL BREAK DOWN, AT LEAST AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL, AND SOME 70,000 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WILL HAVE EVEN MORE TIME ON THEIR HANDS TO ENGAGE IN POLITICS. THE STUDENTS ARE HIGHLY POLITICIZED. WE JUDGE A MAJORITY OF THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP TO BELONG TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY OR TO EXTREMIST POLITICAL MOVEMENTS (MAOIST, TROTSKYITE). SLINOLA HAS BEEN DISTURBED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EDUCATION FIELD. THE APPOINTMENT OF MAGALHAES GODINHO IS THE BEST HE COULD GET FROM A POOR FIELD. IT WAS EITHER GODINHO, OR AN AGING LAW PROFESSOR FROM COIMBRA WHO LACKS THE STAMINA FOR THE JOB, OR JOSE TENGARRINHA, A LAWYER WHOM MANY BELIEVE TO BE A COMMUNIST. TECHNOCRATS AT THE MINISTRY BELIEVE TO BE A COMMUNIST. TECHNOCRATS AT THE MINISTRY BELIEVE THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEMS: APPOINTMENT OF A NO-NONSENSE MFA OFFICER OF IMPECCABLE POLITICAL CREDENTIALS, A STRONG MIND AND IRON IN HIS SOUL.
POST

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